

**SALFORD DIOCESE  
INSPECTION REPORT**



**ST. EDWARD'S  
ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL  
Blackburn Road Darwen BB3 0AA**

Inspection date June 2008  
 Reporting Inspector Mrs. Pamela Parden  
 Inspection carried out in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School Catholic Primary  
 URN 119666  
 Age range of pupils 4-11  
 Number on roll 241  
 Appropriate authority The governing body  
 Chair of Governors Mrs. Margaret Leatham  
 Headteacher Mrs. Alyson Grundy  
 Religious Education Co-ordinator Mrs. Catherine Fletcher  
 Date of previous inspection December 2003

<b>The Inspection judgements are:</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Explanation of the Grades</b>  1 = Outstanding 2 = Good 3 = Satisfactory 4 = Inadequate
Overall effectiveness of the school	1	
Leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school	1	
The quality of Collective Worship	1	
Achievement and standards in Religious Education	2	
The quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education	2	
The quality of the Religious Education curriculum	1	
Leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education	1	
<i>The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements</i>		

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

St Edward's is a voluntary-aided Roman Catholic primary school situated in the town of Darwen and serving the parish of the Sacred Heart and St Edward. Homes range from two large estates of council housing to several new building developments and well-established private housing. There is a broad socio-economic mix of learners whose ages range from 4 to 11 years. The admission number is 30. There are 241 pupils on roll. All are Catholics. 7% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. 14% (34) have been identified as having special educational needs and 3 have a statutory statement of special educational need. 9 of the 10 full-time teachers (90%) are Catholics. 6 teachers hold the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies or equivalent.

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL**

The overall effectiveness of the school is outstanding. It is a very welcoming, happy school with its life clearly based on Gospel values as embodied in the Mission Statement with its clear aim to ensure that "every child matters". It provides a clean, stimulating, very well organised environment in which each individual is respected, cared for and loved and where the talents of all are nurtured. The headteacher gives strong leadership and is well supported by the governors and senior staff. All staff work well as a team and are good role models. They are dedicated, committed, extremely hard working and strive to create and maintain high standards so that the school grows and develops. The strong Catholic ethos ensures outstanding provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Very good provision for Religious Education and prayer and worship together with the positive relationships within the school are further strengths.

### **Improvement since the last inspection**

The school has fully addressed the key issues from the last inspection. After consultation with governors, parents and learners the Mission Statement was reviewed and rewritten. The headteacher was involved at every stage and included all staff. The outcome is a concise statement attractively designed, meaningful to all and clear for learners to understand. It is quite unique. The headteacher ensures that all staff have relevant materials for the *REvision 2000* programme which is also on the school intranet. The Religious Education co-ordinator ensures that every teacher has relevant planning material and monitors progress and continuity.

### **Capacity to improve**

The headteacher has an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and a clear vision for the future. She is strongly encouraged by the governing body and well supported by the staff who, under her guidance, have grown and developed professionally. The chair of governors and Religious Education link governor are very active in their roles. The staff fulfill their curricular responsibilities conscientiously and work very hard together to achieve the best possible outcomes for all learners. Their work contributes effectively to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of each pupil. Thorough self-evaluation leads to the identification of priorities for school development and advice from the Salford Diocese and other agencies is well used. Overall the capacity to improve is therefore very good.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Continue to work to improve parish links.

## **THE LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL**

Leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school are outstanding. They ensure the fulfilment of their aim to, "help every child to grow and develop in the love of God and others". This is reflected in the Mission Statement which was drawn up by staff, governors, parents and learners and impacts on the whole ethos of the school. Governors are well-informed and are involved in the life of the school. They are both challenging and supportive and work in their committees. The chair of governors and the link Religious Education governor actively monitor school policy and both regularly feedback to the governing body. The high quality of the headteacher's leadership, with good support from senior staff, ensures the development of the Catholic life of the school and fulfilment of its mission. All staff are extremely hard working and committed to the school's Catholicity. Excellent systems for self-evaluation and monitoring drive all improvements. Priorities are identified and accompanied by a continuous cycle of planning, action and review. Outstanding relationships ensure a caring community where everyone feels personally valued. Learners successfully exercise responsibilities as school counsellors, monitors or playground pals. There is successful networking with local schools and the associated high school. Extensive work is undertaken by co-ordinators responsible for maintaining community cohesion, family liaison and personal and social education. Home-school links are strong and the school supports the parish based Sacramental Programme. Governors and staff are very anxious to extend further meaningful links with the parish. The school is encouraged in this work as it will further the spiritual development of children and staff through shared involvement.

## **THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

The quality of collective worship is outstanding. The school aims, "to establish through prayer and worship a real sense of belonging and to make it an integral part of the school community". It is committed to helping staff, pupils and parents to develop a relationship with God and provides a rich variety of opportunities and experiences to that end. This impacts upon the learners' spiritual and moral development and their attitudes and values. All assemblies are structured, well planned and recorded. They are linked to the liturgical year or an identified *REvision 2000* theme. They are led on Monday for the whole school by the headteacher and midweek by class teachers for each key stage. Friday's assembly is led by classes in turn and includes a celebration of achievements and awards. The assemblies involve learners in preparation and presentation and include use of resources and other curriculum links. The excellent one observed during the inspection related to 'Good News'. Everyday examples led to the Bible's good news before focusing on the life and work of Saints Peter and Paul. It included readings, prayers and a high standard of hymn singing. Classes pray at set times daily and each has two weekly extended worship celebrations linked to the relevant Religious Education topic. The one observed in Year 4 was reflective, peaceful, sincere and reverent. Learners are encouraged to explore various methods of private, individual, meditative, group and traditional prayers in both formal and informal settings. Focal points in all classrooms reflect Religious Education topics. Mass is celebrated in church on occasions with readings and prayers prepared by the children. The school is very keen to develop these with the parish priest. Parents share assemblies and liturgical celebrations and Masses. The Religious Education co-ordinator supports colleagues on all aspects of prayer and ensures quality resources are available.

## **ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

Achievements and standards in Religious Education are good overall and in some cases outstanding. The outcomes of assessment and recording of individual children's ability and progress enable appropriate targets to be set. Pupils generally meet and exceed these targets and high standards are achieved in the written work and responses. The school's systems for monitoring and evaluation confirms this. Most learners use appropriate terms and vocabulary and respond well in discussion and role play. This was evident in Reception when the children acted out the story of the blind Bartimeus. Learners know and understand the Catholic beliefs and way of life. They are encouraged to relate this to their own lives, to follow Jesus' example and show their love of God in making appropriate choices. They know about and respect other faiths and cultures. There is obvious good knowledge and use of the Bible as observed in Year 6 working on the life of St Paul. Children are encouraged to realise the importance of the family, school and parish. They confidently share thoughts, use research skills and explore and discuss ideas. They enjoy their lessons especially when appropriate tasks and challenges are set. They co-operate and respond intelligently in a capable and mature way. Behaviour is very good and this is achieved through mutual respect and the school's belief that every child matters. Learners show care for others in school and beyond through prayer, good works and a wide range of fund-raising.

## **THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall with some outstanding features in Foundation and each key stage. All teachers have a secure knowledge of the Religious Education curriculum and share their own faith with their pupils to enhance their learning. Planning is thorough and includes clearly stated objectives and tasks. Assessment activities, moderation and detailed records of individual pupils' attainment inform future planning to support progress. This is an area currently being developed to ensure support and targets for all abilities. The very good use of teaching assistants is effective in promoting individual achievement. Teachers' work very hard to achieve the best possible learning outcomes. Challenging tasks are set to deepen learners' knowledge and understanding and to motivate them. Creative use of quality resources, information communication technology, audio and visual aids enhance learning. Teachers' marking at the end of each piece of work is helpful and constructive. Most pupils are co-operative, attentive and involved. They clearly enjoy the varied and interesting teaching styles, tasks and experiences. Parents are happy with their children's achievements in Religious Education. They are regularly informed of work to be covered, receive weekly newsletters, information through the internet and have opportunities twice each year to see teachers and discuss their children's progress. The co-ordinator responsible for home liaison has made great strides in her work in developing good relationships, help, support and trust.

## **THE QUALITY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM**

The quality of the Religious Education curriculum is outstanding. The school fully observes the national and diocesan requirements. It is extremely successful in fulfilling its mission to "grow through our Catholic faith". The school follows its clear, comprehensive policy of recognising each child's needs with special attention to social, moral and spiritual development. Aims are clear and relate largely to the *REvision 2000* programme. They outline objectives for each key stage matching the content and tasks to the relevant age and ability of the learners. Outcomes are identified in pupils' responses and linked to constructive marking, assessment and recording. Prayer, worship and liturgy are closely woven into all work in Religious Education. Thorough medium and short term planning is consistent throughout the school and assessment and evaluation inform teachers of learners' targets reached and future needs. The school worked with the diocese in piloting and implementing the assessment process. It is now developing the next stage of matching tasks to ability. The example of teachers' own personal faith and experiences enhances learning and supports spiritual moral development. Links with other curriculum areas enrich provision. The school works well in ensuring that the Religious Education curriculum is broadly based. Work to help learners' to know about and respect other faiths and cultures is undertaken throughout.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF CURRICULUM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

Leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education is outstanding. Governors are committed to its importance as central to the school's whole life and ethos. The headteacher is well supported by the senior leadership team in her drive to ensure quality and enthusiasm for Religious Education. Her experience and example are instrumental in leading the school forward to provide quality teaching and learning. A comprehensive policy for Religious Education is in place and reviewed regularly. The outstanding skills of the co-ordinator ensure that it is well led. She zealously manages the subject ensuring its high profile in all school life. She monitors and records teachers' planning, scrutinises learners' work, leads staff in moderating assessments and evaluates resource needs. Help and support for colleagues is provided as required. Her action plan for Religious Education contributes to the construction of the School Improvement Plan. Her experience working with diocesan advisers on piloting the assessment programme has resulted in its very successful introduction in the school with records throughout of each learner's progress. The headteacher observes lessons each half term. Her monitoring is continuous and she fully supports the co-ordinator. All relevant diocesan courses are attended and staff are kept up-to-date. The Religious Education link governor and chair of governors are friends of the school and regular visitors. They are extremely helpful, supportive and involved. Governors are kept informed of developments in curriculum Religious Education and concerned to ensure that continuing high standards are maintained.